The Government of Bihar has also been provided with wireless sets, arms and ammunition worth Rs. 1.20 crores, on credit basis, from the Central Para Military Forces.

Threat to Srinagar-Leh Highway

*158. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has flooded Jammu and Kashmir with foreign mercenaries from Lakhanpur to Leh which could pose a challenge to the security to 435 K.M. long Srinagar-Leh Highway; and

(b) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government to identify those foreign mercenaries and also to provide adequate security to the Highways?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) It is a fact that Pakistan has continued to infiltrate foreign mercenaries into J&K which definitely poses a threat to all vital installations including important roads and bridges.

(b) Government have adopted a multi-pronged approach to tackle infiltration and militancy which include, *inter-alia*, strengthening the border management, gearing up intelligence machinery, well-coordinated and sustained operations against terrorists and subversive elements by the State & Central agencies, intensification of patrolling and checking on border and other vulnerable areas, upgrading of technical equipments with the police and security forces, improved inter-action with the border population, etc.

For providing security to Srinagar-Leh Highway and other important roads regular armed pickets have been provided to guard important bridges and strategic locations, shifting Nakas and check points are also made use of. In addition, constant Police patrolling (both mobile and on foot) is done along the Highway, and ROPs (Road Opening Parties) are provided for convoys. Instructions have been issued to Police by the State Government to make arrangements to sanitize all sensitive areas in close coordination with security forces.

Capital Punishment for Rape

*159. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to amend the law to provide Capital punishment for the crime of rape; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) The Central Government is examining a proposal to provide for death penalty for offence of rape. Since criminal law is on the Concurrent List of the Constitution, consultation with State Governments/Union Territories is necessary before amendment to Indian Penal Code is undertaken. In this regard State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been requested to offer their views.

The matter was also discussed at the recent Chief Ministers' Conference at New Delhi. Many of the participants endorsed the proposal for death penalty for rape but others sought time to send their views. The proposal would be examined in the light of the views of States/Union Territories, and, therefore, it would not be practicable to indicate a time frame.

बंजर भूमि के विकास के लिए निधियों का इस्तेमाल न किया जाना

*160. श्री सूर्यभान पाटील वहाडणे: क्या ग्रामीण क्षेत्र और रोजगार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) दिनांक 12 अगस्त, 1998 के दैनिक जागरण में "बंजर भूमि के विकास के लिए राज्य सहायता का